

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Regarding Bridges at Risk for Posting or Closure within 10 Years

1. *How many bridges may need to be posted or closed?*
Based on current bridge inspection data and subsequent review by the Bridge Posting Committee, MaineDOT estimates that 288 bridges are at risk of posting or closure within 10 years, unless repairs or replacements occur first.
2. *Are these bridges safe?*
Yes. MaineDOT will load post or close bridges as necessary to protect public safety.
3. *Why is MaineDOT making this information available to the public?*
During the recent posting of several bridges, municipalities and other stakeholders made it clear that they want earlier notice that a bridge may need to be posted or closed.
4. *Aren't some of these bridges already posted?*
Yes, 69 of the 288 bridges identified already have weight restrictions. These bridges are at risk of more restrictive posting or closure.
5. *Will MaineDOT be keeping a closer eye on these 288 bridges?*
Yes.
6. *How many of these bridges will be fixed before they need to be posted or closed?*
At current bridge funding levels, MaineDOT estimates that perhaps one-half of these 288 bridges would be addressed.
7. *Will these bridges be the first priority for improvement?*
Not necessarily. Available bridge funding must be split between preserving “good” bridges and addressing the highest priority “bad” bridges. Allowing “good” bridges to deteriorate further would make their future improvement cost a lot more, and decrease the chances that bridge conditions will ever reach a manageable, steady state.
8. *Is the number of bridges at risk likely to increase or decrease?*
Without needed funding, the number of “poor” bridges will increase.
9. *Are some of these bridges redundant and perhaps could be removed?*
Some of these bridges carry very small volumes of traffic and have a short detour available. MaineDOT and municipalities will face tough choices as the buying power of the Highway Fund continues to shrink.
10. *What is MaineDOT doing to address this issue?*
First, MaineDOT is strengthening its bridge inspection and posting procedures to maintain public safety as the bridge population gets older. Second, MaineDOT is looking at lower cost options for smaller bridges, especially those that are less traveled.
11. *Can a municipality request that a MaineDOT bridge engineer meet with them to discuss this issue?*
Yes. Please contact Jim Foster, P.E., Bridge Management Engineer, at 207/624-3267.
12. *Who do I call for more information about this issue?*
General questions should be directed to Chip Getchell, P.E., Assistant to the Chief Engineer, at 207/624-3016.